

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

September 11, 2014

MSU Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health
4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing, MI 48910

Present for the Natural Resources Commission

John Matonich, vice chairman
Rex Schlaybaugh
Louise Klarr
Tim Nichols
Vicki Pontz

Absent

J.R. Richardson, chairman

Present for DNR Staff

Keith Creagh, DNR director
William E. Moritz, DNR natural resources deputy
Peter Manning, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant to the NRC
Other department staff

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Vice Chairman **John Matonich** called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. **Matonich** asked for a moment of silence in reference to September 11.

Michigan Brain Injury Association Meeting Update

Wildlife Division chief **Russ Mason** spoke about Camp Liberty which is adjacent to the Sharonville State Game Area, and making the facility more accessible to people with all types of disabilities. He provided an update on the annual meeting of the Michigan Brain Injury Association which was held at the Lansing Convention Center. At the meeting, they discussed a number of groups, and their common objectives of doing better with folks with disabilities so that they can have same opportunities in Michigan's great outdoors. Commissioner **Nichols** mentioned the bridge at Sharonville that was rebuilt by volunteers from construction unions, ironworkers, operating engineers and others. These are the type of partnerships that last a lifetime, not just during the project. September 17, representatives of several tribal veterans'

organizations will be visiting Camp Liberty and Sharonville State Game Area to see how they can become involved in the effort. **Creagh** adds that when he was there he talked to the ironworkers, and they would be more than happy to have summer youth assistance on these types of projects.

Wolf Update

Mason shared an update on the Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, Public Act 281 of 2014 which restores the commission's authority to designate game species in Michigan and to regulate the taking of fish, was recently passed taking effect 90 days after the end of the current session, which would put it in late March or early April. **Mason** discussed the Wolf Management Plan, which is in need of updating. This will occur during the calendar year of 2015. **Matonich** adds that the Commission doesn't currently have the authority under the Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act until March or April of next year, even if the referendums on the November ballot are decided in favor of returning the authority to the commission, that authority would be granted too late in the year for there to be a wolf hunt in 2014. The commission will wait until 2015 to consider another wolf hunt in Michigan. **Schlaybaugh** adds that would it be useful for the Fish and Wildlife committee to get an update on where the Wildlife division is looking at making changes to the plan between now and the first of April. **Mason** will add to a future agenda.

National Wildfire Update

Forest Resources Division chief, **Bill O'Neill** provided an update on firefighting techniques the 20 person crew performed when they were sent out west to assist with wildfires. He shared how they gain the experience and get certified. This group is a partnership and is made up of staff members from Forest Resources division, Wildlife division, Fisheries division, and Parks and Recreation division. The department lends a hand to the national fire team. **O'Neill** also talked about partnerships, particularly with the U.S. Forest Service, noting that the department gets a lot of natural resource work through the service.

Belle Isle – MDOT Intelligence Transportation System

Parks and Recreation Division chief, **Ron Olson** provided a brief update on Belle Isle State Park and recent events. On Belle Isle this past week they had the Intelligence Transportation System International Technology Conference, which brought in over 10,000 people from all over the world. The event showcased the latest in automotive technology. This was a cooperative event between the department and the Michigan Department of Transportation. **Olson** also mentioned the follow through where the faith-based community came together and had a choir concert, which was a ceremonial blessing of the island. **Creagh** thanked **Olson** for his structure and leadership in light of the recent storms, and also thanked **Hagler** and the conservation officers for their assistance with the MDOT Intelligence Transportation System Technology Conference.

Director **Creagh** recognized **Olson** with the Distinguished Service Award, which was recently presented to him by the National Association of State Park Directors for being the state park director who has demonstrated a long-term, sustained record of professional accomplishment in the field of parks and recreation management.

Lake Hudson Great Outdoors Youth Jamboree.

Ray Falsing, Parks and Recreation division, reported that on September 7, they had a great turnout of 1500 children, 270 families at the Lake Hudson Great Outdoor Youth Jamboree. This event was held in partnership with Pheasants Forever, Lake Hudson Pheasant Co-op, and Cabela's. There were over 45 presenters/cooperators providing hands-on activities including outdoor cooking, falconry, fishing activities, and Smokey Bear was there. There was also a youth chukar hunt. **Falsing** noted that many people put much work into this great event.

Bass Season Survey Results

Fisheries Division chief **Jim Dexter** and biologist **Patrick Hanchin** presented information regarding the bass season survey results. Fisheries division has been working on the survey for the past 18 months, and they also discussed past and current regulations and how they are working. To provide additional fishing opportunities across the state, they had to prepare the information and provide it to the public and find out what the public would like to see. **Dexter** shared information on the process, polls conducted, etc. **Hanchin** touched on some of major points to the potential extension of bass season. He shared the history of catch and immediate release regulations from 1988 to present. The Fisheries division will take the results of the survey and make a recommendation at next month's commission meeting about how best to move forward.

Proposed State Forest Plan Amendment

O'Neill provided information regarding the proposed amendment to the state forest plan; in 2008 they created the state forest plan. Regional state forest plans were also created. They are amending the plan to update timber harvest numbers, changing high conservation value areas, updating ecological reference areas, and updating the dedicated habitat area part of the plan. Work instructions will also be updated.

Proposed Nonmetallic Reclamation Lease Auction

Ray Falsing gave a presentation on the reclamation lease auction at Island Lake Recreation Area. The management plan of the park zoned this as natural resources recreation, so it would be appropriate to have hiking and biking trails, and camping. They will be putting out an invitation to bid for the non-metallic reclamation lease early next week. There will be thirty days to submit bids, then the department will have thirty days for review, then the lease will be awarded. They will be using a set of five criteria to rank bids; overall quality of proposed reclamation, number of years they would desire to do reclamation, no longer than 15, phasing-how much they can leave open to the public while they do the work, add a gift of land, and price

per ton of aggregate that will be removed. Currently there are ten companies that have shown an interest.

Director's Award Presentation

The Director's award was presented by director **Creagh** to **Rajender Razdan, Mark Anderson, Janish Shah** from DTMB, **Alison Von Buchwald-Wright**, formerly with MDOT, **Chris Visser, Dennis McDermott, Christa Sturtevant-Good, Denise Gruben** and **Jason Fleming** from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for their effort and hard work on getting the new central reservation system in place to provide services to campers and park customers.

Legislative Report

Trevor VanDyke, Legislative and Legal Affairs Office Director, provided a written report of legislation introduced related to the DNR. In addition to the written report, **VanDyke** provided updates on recent legislation including the Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act.

Safari Club International Involvement Committee Survey Winners

The Michigan Involvement Committee of Safari Club International (SCI) sponsors door prizes for two participants who completed the annual deer harvest mail survey. **Bob Taylor**, chairman of SCI's Involvement Committee, presented **Tim Balzer** from Unionville with a 30.06 rifle and **Robert Block** of Bay City with a crossbow.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

(**Trevor VanDyke** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 3:51 p.m.)

Liz Roxbury is the Program Manager for the Fenner Youth Leadership Program, which serves the underserved urban youth in Lansing. To inspire youth, she added, they must be engaged. These teens are passionate about the outdoors. **Mae Martineau**, president of Youth Leadership Program, also shared some of her thoughts, noting that she is a part of the program because she wants to make a difference. Several of the projects the program has completed include removal of garlic mustard at Fenner, and a prairie project to build healthier habitat. **Martineau** encouraged the commission to reach out and be a partner with the Youth Leadership Program. Commissioner **Nichols** welcomed their involvement and would like to see some of their names on the Youth Conservation Council applications.

Kathy English from Trout Lake came to discuss the preservation of Michigan's natural resources. Concerning Graymont, she is against a mineral swap of 1700 acres in Chippewa County and added that there are better things for this area; hiking, cycling, equestrian use, etc.

Jefferson Henry/Raymond Karboske came to discuss issues of concern with the Waterways Commission. Henry brought up the issue that the Ludington municipal marina is competing

against private industry. They would like to see the Waterways Commission make a change on their policies and procedures, be more of an advisory group.

Director **Creagh** adds there is a long history, and that the department did commit to look at policy and procedures, **Mark Hoffman** has undertaken the task and will continue to look at this issue. The director is sympathetic to their plight in Ludington, the department will continue to work together with them.

Dean Hall, Michigan Bowhunter's Association (MBHA) noted that he was glad for opportunity to be a part of the recent deer management assistance permit (DMAP) meetings. The MBHA appreciates being part of the process but cannot support Wildlife Conservation Order No.10 as it is written. The MBHA stated that crop damage permits and 2013 Wildlife Conservation Order No. 3 could provide the effective outcome Farm Bureau is looking for.

In regard to the International Bowhunter Education Program (IBEP) data, **Hall** gave a copy of the complete records for use in the Michigan database to chief **Hagler**.

Matonich thanked **Hall** for supplying the information. **Matonich** stated that he appreciated the participation of the MBHA in the DMAPS discussions. He encouraged MBHA to introduce themselves to those in need of their expertise, noting that the key factor is to put bow hunters and land owners together.

Amy Trotter, MUCC, also brought forward the topic of DMAPS. The policy of MUCC has been to look at how to provide access to the public to help with the issue before giving out special permits. Wildlife Conservation Order No. 10's approach with the decision tree gives more certainty if the landowner can get a permit or not. They will be interested in the reports on the program in the pilot counties. Limiting to five counties could be a problem to those hunters in those five counties. MUCC will work with their clubs in those areas to reach out to landowners and farmers that are having problems. She hopes they never have to use the antlered buck portion of the order. She adds that attention needs to be paid to what impacts are and then reacting from the data that we get in the next few years. **Schlaybaugh** added that the access program can be improved, and he encourages MUCC to work with Farm Bureau to make it more effective, with the number of farms enrolled to provide access. They recommended this be a pilot project rather than going statewide immediately for entire state. **Pontz** thanked her for her comments and work on this issue. She states that access is about building relationships one on one in their own neighborhood. **Matonich** added that both sides came to the workgroup agreeing that there wasn't enough criteria, too vague; **Doug Reeves** and **Dean Molnar** did a good job putting together the decision tree. Proper reporting will be needed to evaluate this program. This is a program that expires in three years, we will need information to make sure we understand the impacts to see if the program will live on.

David P. Pentiscu of Linden Township came to discuss the non-metallic reclamation, noting that he believes it is a win-win proposition, excellent strategy, but not at the burden of taxpayers or departmental budgets. He asks the commission to consider the total natural resources value of the bids, especially the gifts of land. A strategically placed piece of land will have a great value in context of the whole parks system. **Falsing** adds that the request for proposal allows for that analysis to be completed on the bids.

Andrew Vermeesch of Michigan Farm Bureau, stated that the DMAP changes made in Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 10 will give additional tools, and add clarity of metrics for which the tools will be allowed. Farm Bureau did not get everything they wanted, noting there was much give and take, and they are appreciative of the efforts made by the other groups, the commission, and the director. **Nichols** added that there needs to be communication amongst the hunting community and farming community. **Matonich** stated that this was a tremendous effort of compromise on the parts of the groups and the department.

Dan Kimmel, Conservation director, Michigan Bass Nation (MBN), said that the position of MBN has changed on bass seasons, as they originally started off supporting option C, now they are officially supporting option D, a step using adaptive management. They would like the choice to have more fishing opportunity. Option D is supported by MUCC and the Michigan Bass Federation.

Dale Hendershot from the Michigan Trappers and Predators Callers Association noted that the association is in support of the change in Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 15 of 2014 to clarify trapping on CFA land. He thanked the commission for allowing this to move forward.

Chauncey Moran said that there is an issue with deer eating the crops and believes that the area chosen for the pilot program is a good choice. He also thanked **Ron Olson** for the improvements to the state parks in Michigan.

Vice Chairman Matonich adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 4:56 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 4:57p.m. He noted that all commissioners who were present at the Committee of the Whole were present for the regular meeting.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY – NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Rehabilitator Regulations and Veterinarians, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 14 of 2014.

Trapping on Commercial Forest Lands, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 15 of 2014.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes, August 14, 2014

Commissioner **Nichols** made a motion that the minutes of the August 14, 2014, NRC meeting be approved. Commissioner **Pontz** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Deer Management Assistance Permit Regulations, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 10 of 2014.

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No 10 of 2014, Deer Management Assistance Permits Regulations **Matonich** called for discussion, **Schlaybaugh** noted that attached to the amendment is the decision tree, which will be a part of the order. Any proposal to change the decision tree would need to come back to the commission for approval as part of the order. Commissioner **Nichols** supported the motion. A vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Deer Management Assistance Permit Discount Technical Change, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 13 of 2014.

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 13 of 2014, Deer Management Assistance Permit Discount Technical Change be adopted. Commissioner **Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

DIRECTOR – FOR INFORMATION ONLY AND ACTION ITEMS

Vice chairman **Matonich** listed the “for information only” items listed on the agenda.

Creagh approved the department’s planned October 29 oil and gas lease auction, with an important change. The department received numerous comments regarding parcels within the Hartwick Pines State Park that had been nominated for auction. The land had been designated leasable nondevelopment. Public comments regarding these parcels included information from two grandchildren of **Karen Hartwick**, who gifted the land to the state in 1927. Upon review of the information received from the grandchildren, **Creagh** removed approximately 9,000 acres from the auction to adhere to the spirit and intent of the generous gift of land from **Ms. Hartwick**.

Special Hook Size Fishing Regulations, Fisheries Order Amendment No. 1 of 2014.

Spawning Closures, Fisheries Order Amendment No. 2 of 2014.

Michigan-Wisconsin Boundary Waters, Fisheries Order Amendment No. 3 of 2014.

Special Fishing Regulations for Warmwater Species on Select Waters, Fisheries Order Amendment No. 4 of 2014.

Fisheries Order No. 240.14, Sturgeon Regulations Statewide

Amendment to the 2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan

Director **Creagh** listed the “Director’s Action” items listed on the agenda and indicated he would approve all items.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

Matonich provided the audience with a brief synopsis of the committee meeting noting that there were several informative presentations.

NRC Marketing, Partnership and Outreach Committee

Nichols stated that during the committee meeting there was an update on hunting, fishing, camping, and recreation passport data. The next meeting of the committee will be in November.

NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Administration

Schlaybaugh reported that during this meeting the items covered included background on the Game and Fish Protection Fund, Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration program, and the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration program.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner **Matonich** attended an invasive species organized cooperative meeting the previous day at Sterling State Park in Monroe. This meeting gave him a better understanding of the impact of invasive species.

Commissioner **Klarr** had the opportunity to do some hinge cuttings with MUCC the previous week, and noted that the MSPAC will be meeting next month in Cadillac.

**Talking Points – Director Keith Creagh
Hunter Education Instructor Award Presentations
NRC meeting – McGuire's Resort, Cadillac
October 9, 2014**

The DNR's hunter education program has instructed more than one million students in hunter safety and conservation since its inception in 1946.

Since 1971, hunter education has been required for anyone ages 12-16 who wanted to go hunting. With recent changes, the age requirement has dropped to age 10.

Our hunter education program certifies an average of 20,000 students a year, and we couldn't do it without our instructors who are the backbone of the program.

Each year, we honor a hunter education instructor of the year, but this year, we also want to honor the active instructors who have served the program for 40 years or more.

Our instructors are an all-volunteer corps who do what they do for the love of hunting and the outdoors, and because they want to pass that interest on to young people who are the future of conservation in our state.

So, not only are they teaching safety and ethics, they also are instilling a love for the outdoors that we hope students will carry with them a lifetime.

At this time, I ask **James Johnson** (46 years), **John Seelman** (44 years), **David Hansen** (44 years) and **Joseph Primozich** (43 years) to please come forward.

Congratulations, and thank you for your many years of dedication and service to the state of Michigan.

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** had the opportunity to attend Natural Resources Trust Fund meeting in at Lake St. Clair Metropark in Macomb County, where he learned much about the projects the Trust Fund had funded in the area.

Director **Creagh** thanked the NRC for the work session yesterday, adding that he appreciated the opportunity to discuss some upcoming priorities.

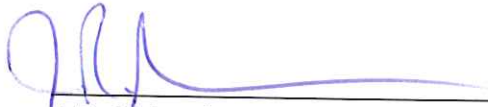
Next Meeting

Vice chairman **Matonich** announced that the next regular meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, October 9, 2014 at McGuire's Resort, 7880 Mackinaw Trail, Cadillac. Committees meeting in October will be the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries, and the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee.

Adjournment

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner **Klarr** seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 10/9/14



J.R. Richardson, NRC Chairman



Keith Creagh, DNR Director